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Classified by Ambassador Wills, Reasons 1.5 (b, d)

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11. (C) The Ambassador met with JVP General Secretary Tilvin Silva and senior MP Vijitha Herath in his office earlier today (June 4). The discussion took place in a positive atmosphere, with the JVP members' expressing a desire to develop a discourse with the USG, even if they did not always agree with USG policies. The Ambassador kicked off the meeting by expressing concern with the JVP's stance re the peace process and economic reform. When queried on the peace process, Silva (who spoke almost exclusively for the JVP side) said his party did not see the LTTE's actions during this ceasefire/peace process period as sincere, but understood that a military solution to the conflict was out of the question. Silva further said that the JVP favored negotiations and would support devolution if favored by a majority of the Sri Lankan people.

12. (C) The JVP insisted on explaining the group's economic policy views. Silva commented that the party supported international trade and foreign investment, but only when Sri Lanka had a strong national economy so as not to imperil either its own or its trading partners' economies(!?). Finally, Silva commented that the timeframe for a SLFP-JVP alliance was perhaps one to two months down the road. (Note: Colombo 859 indicated that the probable SLFP-JVP alliance was much more imminent than that.) Silva said the JVP's desire, if the group gained power, was to deal with the major issues of the day, rather than revamp the government system. With the JVP taking a relatively moderate tack in the meeting, the Ambassador praised the JVP on two fronts: mastery of parliamentary procedure and respect for democratic institutions; and outstanding record of transparency and lack of corruption. Silva and Herath responded warmly to these comments. (Note: Both Silva and Herath understood English, but responded in Sinhala through a translator.) (POL)

WILLS